

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

To: The President and other members of the National Directorate of the Conservative Party.

Subject: Organizational Work.

1. This report supplements the previous one of 28 July 1948, and covers my trip all over the country (Colombia). It is a realistic estimate of the present situation and a general report, which should assist the National Directorate to make accurate decisions based on the situation. I believe that a frank presentation of the truth is necessary before a workable solution can be reached. Thus, I wish this report to be accepted as the result of observation and an impartial analysis of the situation, and that it not cause unpleasantness or be interpreted as bitterness on my part. The following points will be discussed:

- A) Work of the past three months.
- B) Trips and observations thereon.
- C) Summary of the situation.
- D) Conclusions.
- E) Three possible solutions.
- F) Miscellaneous observations of interest.

A. Work of the past three months.

2. All the departmental commands have been organized, as was stated in the report of 28 July 1948. As a result of the difficulties explained in that report, the problems anticipated therein have presented themselves. These problems have resulted in:
 - a. A need to retire several of the agents who were previously appointed, such as those in Magdalena, Antioquia, Caldas, and Boyaca, resulting in increased expenses and modification of work which has been done;
 - b. A paralysis of work in other localities, such as Norte Santander, Cundinamarca, Huila, and Tolima, although the respective commands were not dissolved; and
 - c. The elimination of the commands in Bolivar and Atlantico, for personal reasons.
3. As a result, a great deal of time was spent organizing and reorganizing, sending commissions to various sections, and attempting to replace incompetent personnel. This caused an appreciable increase in expenses and involved a great deal of lost time for me. I was unable to devote any time to studying general plans, coordination of geographic zones, or the related study of material and equipment.
4. I spent the rest of the time making several trips to study various problems and to reorganize more efficiently. I made the following trips, which proved to be very necessary: several to Huila, Boyaca, and Santander; one to Tolima; and a general trip which encompassed Atlantico, Magdalena, Bolivar, Antioquia, Caldas, Valle, Cauca, and Marino. El Choco is the only place I did not reach.

B. Trips and observations thereon.

5. I made nine trips, which I shall enumerate in alphabetical order.
6. Antioquia. We encountered many obstacles in our work in the beginning, since its aims were not understood. The Commands, as well as the various commissions sent here, did not receive the necessary moral or financial support, in some cases. The situation has become stabilized now and the Departmental Directorate is cooperating actively. During my visit, the entire group listened to me

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willingly and our free exchange of ideas brought about a better mutual understanding and the elimination of many problems.

7. Atlantico. The Directorate has been very cordial and alert. From the start our work has received excellent support and all the problems have been clearly understood. Financial support has been slight, but little was actually needed. The Command was able and the results of its work are satisfactory, I believe. Unfortunately, the agent in charge of the Command accepted an important position in another part of the country, although it was with my knowledge and permission. During my stay in Barranquilla, I organized a substitute Command which I instructed concerning previous and future work. I believe that this department will present a good front in the coming struggle, in spite of the well-known political disparity.
8. Bolivar. I found the directorate here completely disintegrated. Although I was unable to see Dr. Araujo, who was away, I held discussions with other individuals which only led to a general orientation. The lack of an organized directorate in the department for such a long time is extremely unfortunate. At first, the appointed Command was able and efficient and had the support of the former Directorate, but once it lost this support the Command was up in the air and withdrew for the usual reasons. Without a group to guarantee me support, I was unable to reorganize the Command, and it has been impossible to do so to date. The abandonment of the preliminary work is a serious loss.
9. Boyaca. The desires of the National group and its aims are not known, although the meeting of the Presidents of the various Directorates was held here. I was able to explain the proposals, but I only had a slight opportunity to contact the previous Directorate. The Directorate accepted the plan theoretically but avoided any financial commitments. A special agent was assigned to do the preparatory work and good workable plans were made. The agent did not succeed in putting the plans into effect and was unable to travel. Although the Secretary is an understanding and enthusiastic person, he has no money at his disposal. I was able to organize some regional Commands to work independently, since the substitute (departmental) Command is incompetent and works sporadically. ~~A capable and responsible central group is needed at once.~~ Fortunately the Party Secretary is aware of our work and cooperates with us.
10. Caldas. I found that the Directorate was practically dissolved and the President had resigned. I spoke at length with Dr. Alfonso Rios Garcia, but he did not consider himself to be capable of assuming complete responsibility. Our work was nullified and Rios broke our last appointment. I didn't have any luck with Pereira either. The Command has failed twice because it lacked funds. This might possibly be caused by the confused and delicate situation existing here. Where there is no Directorate, it is impossible to organize a Command. However, a final attempt was made and a small, secret organization has been formed "some place in Caldas". As soon as the situation becomes normal, this group will serve as a good basis for later work.
11. Cauca. Both the local politicians and the Departmental Directorate have shown wonderful spirit and collaboration. The Command is working under excellent conditions and the reports issued by it promise great success in the future. It is merely necessary to improve the existing organization slightly and to maintain discipline and faith in the Party.
12. Cundinamarca. The Directorate has not provided any assistance, in fact it has hindered our work, and we are actually forced to deal directly with the National Directorate. The Command was temporarily successful in the provinces, but two months ago all work stopped because of financial difficulties and the leaders' complete disillusionment. Nothing has been done in Bogota for these reasons and because of the cool attitude of the Municipal Directorate. The Command was later persuaded to renew its efforts with the promise of financial assistance from the National Directorate. When this problem is solved, our plans will be carried out effectively and swiftly because all the theoretical preparatory work has been completed and the people are receptive. A sum of 2,000 pesos monthly will be sufficient and should be provided at once.

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12. Huila. The Directorate had no knowledge of our project. In spite of various trips that I made there, they gave us no financial support nor did they show any enthusiasm. There are three regional members in the Command, who are so occupied with personal work that they can do practically nothing to support us. Since there is no regional member available, it will be necessary to allocate the funds for an agent there. I was unable to find an agent for this department whose official position would entail travelling in it. Practically everything is still to be done in this important section.
14. Magdalena. The Directorate is very good and has shown interest and enthusiasm. Although this was the only department to state its need for financial support at the meeting of the Presidents of the Directorates, it has unfortunately received none. Originally a Command was formed with financial support from the National Command, but it was unable to carry on its work. Then it was organized around individuals whose positions enabled them to travel. Today, Magdalena is one of the most advanced departments. During my visit several changes were made which resulted in a better coverage of the entire territory.
15. Narino. The present members of the Directorate are doing well. The personal assistance of Dr. Burgos is especially commendable. An attempt is being made to better the financial situation because contributions have been very erratic. The Command functioned temporarily, and was assisted greatly by the collaboration of Dr. Burgos and the funds available at that time. Unfortunately the precarious financial situation prevented our appointee from staying and it was necessary to abandon the work. I was unable to find a local person to take over the work, but fortunately Dr. Burgos is very capable and has sound judgment. It will be impossible to handle the situation in this department effectively until after the lack of money is eliminated.
16. Norte de Santander. I was unable to contact the Departmental Directorate, and was only able to see the important persons in Cucuta and Pamplona. General Luciano Jaramillo was especially understanding and is attempting to reach an agreement with the Directorate concerning financial support and the solution of certain minor problems. An acceptable Command was organized from Bogota, but it did not function because it lacked funds. I met with it in Pamplona and we readjusted the work, planned a division of the department into zones, and appointed the various sub-commands. The work is almost complete. When I returned to Bogota, however, I received a letter from General Jaramillo telling me of his failure with the Directorate. Thus, all hopes are dashed and our work will be reduced to a minimum. While I was away from Bogota, however, a member of the Command spoke with Dr. Villarroel and I understand that he returned to Santander with decisions which may improve the situation.
17. Santander Sur. Both the Directorate and the Command were absent and I was unable to contact either one of them. The Directorate has played an unsurpassed role in supporting the Command and this may place Santander in first place (make it the most successful). The preliminary work was delayed because a great deal of effort was expended in Bogota to secure the proper Command for this region. The search was successful and, according to present reports, the organization is visibly progressing. Practically the entire department is covered and the work is developing with enthusiasm and efficiency. In Garcia Rovira, I found that excellent preparatory work had been done, and when the Command arrives, he should find all the necessary facilities for the practical development of his work. This department offers the most hope.
18. Tolima. I found the Directorate almost disintegrated and was unable to speak to the President, who was away. I interviewed other members, who indicated that there was a lack of direction and had either resigned or were planning to resign. The Directorate does not provide any funds for our work nor does it have any unity or enthusiasm. The individual who was appointed to be the Command had to borrow money for his hotel bill and had a low morale. The work seemed hopeless from the beginning. Upon my return to Bogota, I arranged for the employment of the member in Ibague. Low morale and lack of support made all my efforts practically useless, and, as a result, the work in Tolima has not been worth the effort so far.

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19. Valle. Originally, misunderstandings and fear caused serious difficulties in our work, but important members of the Directorate and well-known politicians intervened and obtained cooperation. The Command, which is composed of local members, functions normally, and although the work is advancing slowly, it is in the right direction. Various attempts have been made to secure employment in Cali for the necessary personnel, but nothing has been accomplished to date. I believe that reinforcement of the Command is indispensable. Lt. Jesus Bejarano M., especially, should be there, either in the police or better yet in the branch of the INA (sic). Since this has not been possible, I am requesting the assistance of the National Directorate in this matter. In any event, the situation in Valle is quite hopeful.

C. Summary of the situation.

20. The foregoing report will not be very encouraging to the National Command, since the desired results have not been achieved. I believe that this is caused by several factors:
- a. All sections of the country have not been covered, which means that the plan for coordinated and joint action will fail, especially in counteracting violence promoted by the opposition. Isolated action is relatively ineffective and will not allow us to take advantage of local gains nor will it place us in a position to supply timely aid to sections which are in danger.
 - b. There is a great disparity within the sections I covered between the quantity and quality of the work and the amount of aid received from the political Directorates. This causes the more advanced areas to be isolated.
 - c. Cundinamarca, the most important and key department, is at present incapable of devoting sufficient time to the rest of the country to solve serious difficulties satisfactorily.
 - d. A lack of good will and enthusiasm on the part of appointed personnel has resulted in many departments. This is at the root of our present, serious problem of securing new personnel. It is really a problem to secure an agent for appointment to any department.
21. The following results have been obtained to date:
- a. Appreciable success in Santander, Magdalena, and Cauca.
 - b. Initial success and a hopeful outlook in Atlantico, Antioquia, Valle, and Narino.
 - c. Partial, temporary success in Norte Santander, Bolivar, Cundinamarca, and Boyaca.
 - d. Almost no success in Tolima, Huila, and Caldas.
 - e. No success in Choco.
22. New Commands should be established in Bolivar, Caldas, Narino, Huila, and Tolima.

D. Conclusions.

23. To understand these it is necessary to remember that this sacred and tremendous responsibility was assumed willingly and hopefully by us under the inspiration of our national and Party ideals.
24. The results do not live up to our work or expectations.
25. This was caused by circumstances beyond our control. We had no political power and were thus unable to eliminate or alleviate poor morale, which has been

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caused by a lack of understanding, unfounded jealousy, coolness on the part of the departmental directorates, thwarted ambitions, schisms within the sectional directorates of the Party, disorganization of the directorates, and actual sabotage of our work.

26. The financial situation is another important and detrimental factor. Every undertaking is hopelessly expensive and it must be understood that the necessary money must be invested before any results can be expected. Otherwise, we should give up.
27. In the cases in which the morale was high and financial aid was forthcoming, visible and far-reaching results have been our compensation.
28. Whereas the ^{National} National Directorate is sincerely interested in our work, many sectional directorates work independently and do not carry out its suggestions. This bears out the general understanding of the Conservative masses of the country that the Conservative Party of Colombia is a federated party.
29. The National Directorate must make a definite decision. Half-way measures will not work. This costly and delicate operation should either be organized properly or abandoned. The following two points should be considered in deciding whether to continue or not:
 - a. The need for a command to eliminate the federated system so that the hierarchy could be firmly reestablished and effective discipline imposed.
 - b. The necessary funds should be supplied to the responsible individual so that our mission could be directed and implemented.
30. I must admit that the National Directorate has complied with every request for money or assistance, but since the requests have come only from some departments, it is natural that the above results have been achieved. It is impractical and unwise for us to continue working as we have been, because our efforts are fruitless without the support of every sectional directorate. It is also unwise to continue as we are, because we, personally, would be blamed if we should fail to resist an attack at some later date. I have explained the situation clearly and impartially in the hopes that an explanation will serve as a basis for future discussions.

C. Three Possible Solutions.

31. The National Directorate could assume the task of coordinating the undertaking throughout the country. It would then have to assess the departments with obligatory, proportional contributions for a common fund. It should be between 2,000 and 2,500 pesos monthly per department. The sectional directorates should be required to collaborate completely with the Commands.
32. The National Directorate could merely give financial assistance to departments lacking funds. Thus Cundinamarca, Boyaca, Tolima, and Huila would receive more aid, while Atlantico, Norte de Santander, Magdalena, Cauca, Santander Sur, Bolivar, Antioquia, Caldas, and Valle would receive less.
33. The undertaking could either be cancelled completely or partially cancelled by abandoning the work started by our experts and leaving only one of them attached to each directorate in an advisory capacity. The advisors could continue to plan, instruct the members of the directorates, and coordinate the organizational work. This would reduce the cost to very little.

D. Miscellaneous observations of interest.

34. Because I have encountered different conditions from those seen by the National Directorate in its trips and because I feel obliged to assist the Directorate in every way, I shall present my observations. They may seem bitter, but I shall not try to soften them, since that would give an erroneous picture of the situation.

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- a. The lack of respect of the Conservative masses for the Government is tremendous and alarming. The policy of National Union is completely repudiated in all parts of the Republic. Conservatives are completely disillusioned by what seems to be an uninterrupted series of crooked deals and intrigues.
- b. The lack of prestige of the legislative members is as bad, and is aggravated by hatred and lack of respect. The people may vote against us in the next elections. An intense campaign and the presentation of a vigorous and clear platform may save the situation. Conservative votes for the increase of parliamentary pay was a serious mistake.
- c. The people believe that the National Directorate has the reins of power in its hands, and, therefore, the lack of respect for the Government affects its leaders. However, the various members are sincerely respected.
- d. In various respects, the lack of prestige of the regional directors is very evident. Such groups do not meet, make no decisions, do not travel through the provinces, are frequently divided, demonstrate avid personal ambitions, disregard the candidates until the eve of elections, pay no attention to the complaints of the Party members, do not listen to their troubles, refuse to give them professional help in critical political moments, and relegate problems such as sedition to the people. They desire power, strength, disinterestedness, high ideals, and grandeur. They are motivated more for the individual than for the cause.
- e. Despite the foregoing, the masses basically believe in the Party. Morale is dazzling, and its strength is amazing. The Party, as such, is perfect.
- f. Political agitation is now very intense in most of the departments. There are regions where a café incident could grow into a revolution. A "florero" (machete) is ready in the hands of every Colombian. The situation demands a firm control and close contact with the masses.
- g. It is especially urgent, that the National Directorate and the sectional directorates organize an information service for immediate use, rapidly and effectively. In carrying out my task I have discovered important and serious problems, but lacked the proper personnel to follow them up. We cannot avail ourselves of the official service, but on occasion it uses us. The Directorate should not continue to be blind, and money invested in this project would be well repaid.
- h. I request that the National Directorate cooperate by urging the Ministry of Public Works the prompt completion of the connecting section of the Huila-Cauca road and the connecting section of the Surat-a-Arboledas road.
- i. All of the sectional directorates state that they lack funds because the National Directorate appropriates all the funds collected in the various sections. All of them are amazed that economic aid has been demanded of them, since they believe that the National Directorate should pay the expenses of the Departments from its own funds.
35. Without more for the present, very sincerely, and in hopes of a definite solution, I remain,

Manuel Agudelo G.

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